

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TAGS : UN, OCON
SUBJECT : UN ADMINISTRATION; COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES HOLDS
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

BEGIN SUMMARY: AT INITIAL MEETING JANUARY 5, COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES ELECTED OKEYO (KENYA) AND JEZIL (CZECHOSLOVAKIA) AS CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN RESPECTIVELY, LEAVING ELECTION TWO OTHER VICE-CHAIRMAN AND RAPPORTEUR TILL NEXT MEETING WEEK OF JANUARY 23, WHEN VARIOUS DEPARTURES FROM CALENDAR AND WORK PLANNED FOR COMING YEAR WILL BE DEALT WITH. SOVIET DELEGATION CHALLENGED PROPRIETY OF RESCHEDULING OF 27TH SESSION OF COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN WITHOUT REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES AND ASKED THAT COMMITTEE BE PROVIDED WITH EXPLANATION OF LATE SUBMISSION OF SOME REPORTS TO FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING 32ND GA.
END SUMMARY

1. BECAUSE ONE (UNIDENTIFIED) REGIONAL GROUP FAILED TO AGREE PRIOR TO 32ND UNGA ADJOURNMENT UPON A SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES, UNGA PRESIDENT MOJSOV WAS UNABLE TO APPOINT COMMITTEE UNTIL DECEMBER 23. MEMBERS APPOINTED THAT DATE BY MOJSOV ARE:

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ALGERIA, AUSTRIA, CANADA, CANADA, CHILE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EGYPT, FRANCE, HONDURAS, INDONESIA, JAPAN, KENYA, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND, NIGERIA, PERU, PHILIPPINES, SRI LANKA, TUNISIA, UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND YUGOSLAVIA.

ALL MEMBERS EXCEPT FRANCE ATTENDED MEETING.

2. SINCE OKEYO (KENYA), WHOM IT WAS COMMONLY ASSUMED WOULD CONTINUE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, DEPARTING JANUARY 5 FOR THREE MONTHS HOME LEAVE, COMMITTEE MET AFTERNOON JANUARY 4 TO FORM BUREAU AND DISCUSS ORGANIZATION. ULTRA-SHORT NOTICE PREVENTED FULL CONSULTATIONS AMONG DELEGATIONS ON NOMINATIONS. EAST EUROPEANS, HOWEVER, HAD NOTIFIED SECRETARIAT THEY WISHED REPRESENTATION ON BUREAU IN NEWLY CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE AND ADVANCED CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS CANDIDATE FOR VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP. OKEYO WANTED COUNTERBALANCE EE'S WITH HAHN (CANADA) AS OTHER VICE-CHAIRMAN, BUT HAHN RESISTED ADAMANTLY ON GROUNDS HE WILL BE DEPARTING IN JUNE. MEANTIME, LATIN AMERICANS, UNHAPPY THAT THEIR SEAT HAD BEEN CEDED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION TO EAST EUROPEANS DEMANDED REPRESENTATION ON BUREAU. THIS LED TO DECISION TO ESTABLISH THIRD VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP TO WHICH LATINS INTEND NOMINATE PERMREP OF HONDURAS (CARIAS).

3. SINCE PERMANENT SC MEMBERS, CANADA AND AUSTRIA (BECAUSE OF DONAUPARK CONSIDERATIONS), WILL ALL REFRAIN FROM SEEKING ELECTION, NEW ZEALAND (HANNAH) REMAINS AS SOLE WEO DELEGATION AVAILABLE EITHER FOR VICE-PRESIDENCY OR RAPPORTEUR. WEO DELEGATIONS REGARD LATTER POSITION AS MORE IMPORTANT, SO THIRD VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP PROBABLY EITHER WILL GO BY DEFAULT TO ANOTHER LDC OR REMAIN UNFILLED.

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4. COMMITTEE AGREED MEET AGAIN WEEK OF JANUARY 23RD TO COMPLETE BUREAU, DEAL WITH VARIOUS DEPARTURES FROM APPROVED CALENDAR OF ECOSOC MEETINGS (SEE E/1978/L.2 OF 23 DECEMBER 1977), ESTABLISH VENUE FOR PREPARATORY CONFERENCE ON INCENDIARY AND OTHER SPECIFIC CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, DISCUSS TIMING AND DURATION OF SUBSTANTIVE SESSION, POSSIBLY DISCUSS DIRECTION SUBSTANTIVE SESSION, AND HEAR WHAT WORK SECRETARIAT PLANS FOR TWO NEW POSTS APPROVED 32ND UNGA TO SUPPORT WORK ON COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES.

5. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT COMMITTEE SHOULD MEET MONTHLY ON A FIXED SCHEDULE TO DEAL WITH DEPARTURES. THERE IS SOME SENTIMENT IN FAVOR OF ORGANIZING SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF COMMITTEE DURING THIRD WEEK IN APRIL, SO AS TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH TRAVEL SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS WHO ALSO SIT ON ACABQ, APPARENTLY LIMITED TO STUART (UK). (MME DERRE USUALLY REPRESENTS FRANCE. TERADA REPRESENTED JAPAN AND FOKINE USSR AT JANUARY 4 MEETING.)

6. SOVIET DELEGATION (FOKINE) NOTED JANUARY 4 JOURNAL ANNOUNCED POSTPONEMENT "DUE TO UNFORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES OF 27TH SESSION OF COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN. FOKINE OBJECTED THAT THIS DECISION MADE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE ON

CONFERENCES OR GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AS CLEARLY REQUIRED BY ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, AND INQUIRED AS TO NATURE OF UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES. ECOSOC SECRETARIAT REPLIED THAT DOCUMENTATION WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE IN TIME FOR ORIGINAL MEETING SCHEDULE AND SAID THAT THIS HAD BECOME APPARENT ONLY LATE IN DECEMBER. SECRETARIAT, FACED WITH SITUATION IN WHICH SATISFACTORILY SUBSTANTIVE MEETING COULD NOT BE HELD FOR WANT OF DOCUMENTATION, ACTED WITH CONCURRENCE OF PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC TO POSTPONE MEETING APPROXIMATELY TWO MONTHS. FOKINE FURTHER OBJECTED THAT SINCE COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN MEETS ONLY ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS, DELAY IN PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTATION COULD HARDLY BE TERMED "UNFORESEEN". AT VERY LEAST, FOKINE CONTINUED NEED FOR POSTPONEMENT MUST HAVE BEEN APPARENT DURING GA SESSION WHEN THIS MATTER COULD HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH IN REGULAR FASHION.

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7. FOKINE'S INTERVENTION LED TO FURTHER DISCUSSION OF JURISDICTION OF COMMITTEE OVER ECOSOC CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES, NOTING PARTICULARLY RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY ECOSOC AT 1977 SUMMER SESSION IN GENEVA. DECIDING THAT CHANGES IN PATTERNS OF MEETINGS PROPOSED BY SUBSIDIARY BODIES BE CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES IN CONSULTATION WITH BUREAU OF ECOSOC. EXCHANGES AMONG CHAIR, ECOSOC SECRETARIAT REPRESENTATIVE, CANADIAN, US AND SOVIET DELEGATIONS DISCLOSED SOME DIFFERENCES AS TO

INTERPRETATION OF ECOSOC DECISION RELATING PRECISELY TO JUNCTURE AT WHICH COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES SHOULD BE CONSULTED. ECOSOC SECRETARIAT REPRESENTATIVE STATED THAT NEW DATES FOR SUCH MEETINGS WILL BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES, FOLLOWING DECISIONS BY BUREAU OF ECOSOC. THIS PROPOSED PROCEDURE SEEMED PROVISIONALLY ACCEPTABLE TO COMMITTEE.

8. FOKINE ALSO RECALLED THAT WORK OF FIFTH COMMITTEE IN 32ND UNGA HAD BEEN HAMPERED BY FAILURE OF SECRETARIAT TO OBSERVE DEADLINES ESTABLISHED FOR SUBMISSION OF VARIOUS REPORTS. HE REQUESTED THE COMMITTEE BE PROVIDED WITH A LIST OF REPORTS SUBMITTED LATE, INDICATION OF SECRETARIAT UNIT RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION OF SUCH REPORTS AND AN EXPLANATION OF REASONS FOR DELAY. US DELEGATION (CUNNINGHAM) SECONDED FOKINE'S REQUEST, BUT SAID THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE SEEK CORRECTIVE ACTION

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TO FORESTALL SUCH DELAYS IN FUTURE RATHER THAN SIMPLY CONDUCT AN INQUEST FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPOSING CULPRITS. FOLINE CONCURRED IN THIS VIEW.

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